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ORATION

DELIVERED AT

THE COMMENCEMENT

OF THE

COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA,

Wednesday, June 3d, 1868.

BY THE

REV. JOSEPH A. BENTON,

Of San Francisco.

SAN FRANCISCO:

EXCELSIOR PRESS, BACON AND COMPANY, PRINTERS,

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SOME OF THE PROBLEMS OF EMPIRE.

*Mr. President, Officers and Trustees ;
Ladies and Gentlemen :*

The world was made for man, and not man for the world. The world studied in the light of this maxim leads to true science ; in the light of any different maxim, to sciolism. The world was so made for man that it was intended to be in subjection to him. All right-minded persons respect that venerable authority which assigns to man dominion over air, earth and sea. Legitimately and theoretically, man is lord of the world. It is his asserted privilege and right. But, as yet, this is only a predicament of the possible. The prerogative has been very imperfectly maintained. Through one lapse, dispersion, confusion, and alienation, and another, the failure to maintain the prerogative has been very marked. Beginning frequently with the rudest forms, the attempt to maintain the prerogative has been the grand struggle of the ages.

The desire for dominion naturally concerns itself first with the more tangible forces of nature which offer themselves to be harnessed and guided ; and then with the more tameable parts of the animal kingdom. But these successes are too few and the processes too rude to give satisfaction to the heart ; and so, from the earliest times, the ambition to rule has, for its gratification, turned away too much from earth, air and sea, from brute and clime, to the assertion of dominion over man himself—as an inferior, or as a captive, or as one unskilled in the use of arms. In this direction, in fact, have been turned many of the great heads and hearts, the strong arms and resolute wills of the race in all the centuries of time.

Empires have been built on man overthrown, rather than on chained seas and continents subdued, and forests hewn down, and mountains leveled, and rivers spanned, and nature wooed into the bondage of sweet and tireless servitude.

The old dream of empire seems to have been a magnificent rather than a grand one. It was continental, not universal. Its horizon was scarcely wider than that set by the common thirst for power, and the probable sweep of armies ; though new fields of empire shaped themselves from chaos as the centuries rolled. And when, at length, imagination had plumed her wings for adventurous flight, the habitable world had outgrown human conceit, and the possibilities of men had become immeasurable.

Profane history knows nothing of any very early empire. There was none. There could be none. Empire is impossible where there is not some sort of culture to become its nucleus, and then its center. Barbarism, by its very terms, excludes organization, culture and art. Men must begin, at least, to think, to study, to project, to combine and organize, before they can render war and conquest even dignified, and before any permanence can be given to their results. As soon as it is known how conquests can be held, as well as made, the act of governing men has been found ; at least, in its rudiments.

The desire to rule men, and the thought that force must needs carry over the desire into effect, because nothing else could, long held sway in the world. For generations the art of war was almost the one study of the race, outside of the number that must be, in every age, hewers of wood and drawers of water, mere plodders of the earth. Yet, slowly, the desire to have dominion has widened out, and risen up, and refined itself, and the knowledge of what dominion might become has increased, and the dream of empire has grown heavenwide. The great empires of the world, those that have been most directly in the line of authentic human history, have shown a kind of progress toward some true ideal, and have illustrated also the fatality of the wrong idea. They have, in their own ways, been fulfilling that wise and good providential purpose which seems to us to have been, and to be, to bring the human race finally into the fullness of that dominion which was made at the first its distinguishing and grand prerogative. It is one of the rights of mankind to have all things put under itself in air, and earth, and sea.

And we are to regard all the assertions of power, all the struggles for preëminence, even in their frequent failure, but as so many fore-shadows and prophecies of that glorious dominion which is to be, and is becoming, as the generations go marching along.

Glancing at the ancient world, we see its five more noted empires, and turning to the modern world we behold other five, as well as regions and peoples that have, at this stage of remark, no classification. We assume that every distinguished, mighty empire has had its own meaning, and has illustrated some dominant truth or law; not to the exclusion of every other, but in the forefront of all others. The empire of the Assyrians, Babylonians and Chaldeans, for instance, represented the idea of absolutism—both in war and peace—the monarch being regarded as the owner of his empire, all its land, all its property, all its men, and all their powers, and all their products. The empire of the Medes and Persians represents the idea of destination, the immutable frame of things—legalities and institutions stereotyped, the unalterable sacredness of what has been. The Grecian empire represents the idea of culture, beauty and satisfaction, to be obtained through game, exploit, development, art, and generous training, and even war as an art. The Roman empire represents the idea of power asserting itself magnificently, in structures of conquest, laws, institutions, cities, aqueducts, roads, and other monuments. The Chinese empire represents conservatism; the notion that perfection has been reached; that the best is possessed; that the highest possible or practicable has been gained, and that men have nothing to concern themselves with but the traditions of the past and the maxims of the sages. So much, in few words, do the five governmental empires of the ancient world signify to us.

The five modern governmental empires on the same fields of action, in the main, are the Turkish, the British, the French, the Russian, and the German; and if we recognize the Chinese as modern, there will be six. The Turkish empire represents the idea of fanaticism, growing out of a fatalistic philosophy, and the sword regarded as the weapon of church and state, and hewing the way for men into a future heaven of sensual delights. The British empire represents possession, wealth, rank, and asserted superiority, with a patronizing regard for the great masses of the people. The French empire represents brilliant achievement, progress, aspiration, steadiness in

the pursuit of fame, along with great unsteadiness of method. The Russian empire represents the idea of dominion, vastness, numbers, grandeur undeveloped, and novelty of position, and something of the rawness of a people unused to their place. The German empire represents historic pride, the power of great memories, and the affinities of race, language and literature. And the modern empire of China represents the force of ideas, institutions and characters, in holding their way, like a gulf-stream, through oceans of time, in conquering their conquerors, and living on through changes of dynasties and invasions of philosophies. If we introduce this New World of ours into the view, we have the empire of liberty for the northern part of America; and the Brazilian empire of hope and promise, and growth, law and light, for the southern part of America.

In this brief glance we have, of course, passed over the smaller parts of the civilized world, and all those parts of the globe which are half-civilized or barbarous.

One grand problem just now before mankind is a confederation of the great nations, and a reconstruction of governmental empires. The smaller a nation is the more it costs in proportion to wealth and population to maintain its government. Hence, for economical and for other reasons, there should be no small nations. Other things the same, the governments of great countries are the best and cheapest. And it should be the aim of mankind to consolidate and diminish governments, not to increase them; and to build out great empires of constitutional freedom, law and power, which shall respect themselves, and shall command the respect of all others in existence.

Were I to indicate my views of the proper division and adjustment of mankind into economical and grand empires, I should premise a few things. There is no longer any need of defining national boundaries by the physical features of the globe; such as seas, rivers, and mountains. Blood, language and religion are commonly the ties that must bind empires together, in addition to economical reasons, and those of local necessity and sympathetic history. On the continent of Europe, then, I would consolidate all the peoples whose language is of Latin origin into one empire; France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, and parts of Austria and Switzerland. Austria should cease to be, and its parts go, according to language

and blood, into Italy, Germany, Greece and Russia. The German empire should have all the Teutonic peoples for its own, taking in portions of Austria, Switzerland and Holland, and all of Norway, Sweden and Denmark. Russia is so huge in proportions as to need no enlargements, but should take to itself all such Scandinavian and Slavie peoples as are not necessary to the symmetry and local requirements of any other nation. Turkey should be thrust out of Europe, and sent to the regions east of Asia Minor, where an Arabic empire might live and flourish. A new Grecian empire should then replace Turkey in Europe and Asia Minor, in Crete and in Cyprus. The British empire, insular and Asiatic, might, for the present, continue as it is. In the course of another century a new empire of India may arise: when Brahm and Budh shall have made their bed together *in nubibus*, and floated away into oblivion. An empire yet to be should hold the bulk of Africa; Australasia should be erected into a power by itself; all South America be given to Brazil, and all North America to the Great Republic. The unenumerated fractions of the world would remain to be adjusted by elective affinities and by economical considerations, as time advanced. If it should be objected that some of these empires might be grand despotisms, it can be said that grand despotisms are not half so bad as small despotisms, not half so expensive, and not likely to last half so long.

It is obvious that one of the earliest measures of necessity before, and in, such a readjustment is, that of a common agreement amongst all the nations upon a unit of value, a good money standard, and a world coinage, a general system of weights and measures for all sorts of commodities and business, for estimating the tonnage of ships, and for deciding upon every other matter important in the intercourse of men in trade, travel, science and philosophy.

Another, and perhaps, a more difficult problem to be solved, in this order of things, is that of an international or universal language, and a general grammar. The race must regain what it lost—certainly as long ago as when the tower in the plains of Shinar was building. It must, practically, become again, for its grand affairs, “of one speech and one language.” The time must come speedily when a cultured man can go around the world, with the same language, the same money, the same dress, the same methods of living, the same modes of travel, to which he has accustomed

himself at home, as a cosmopolitan in prospect, and a lord of the world.

It is not desirable, if it were possible, to abolish the indigenous speech, the vernacular tongue, of any people. The traditions, habits, language, and style of peoples are necessary to their national life, literature, and best peculiarities ; and these ought not to be rudely, or otherwise, crushed out, or driven away. But, the common language of the world could be naturalized, by being made the written language of Indians, Islanders, and other tribes, brought, for the first time, into the realm of civilization ; and while in the process of being transformed into new peoples. And so, in the process of time, it might come to pass, that the universal language proposed, should become the language of second nature to multitudes and nations.

At the present time, the French is the more common language of the social and polite world—so far as there is any ; and the English is the common language of commerce and trade—so far as there is any. But neither of these is simple enough in its structure for the universal language. It may be too soon to show how such a language ought to be constructed, from the languages of modern Europe ; but philologists might prepare one for trial—simple in its structure and of broad application, which should be written in the Roman characters, and still be such that the telegraphs might employ it, and save all trouble of changes and translations in every new kingdom which the lightning has traversed with measured step. A very wonderful thing for our advancement, to-day, were a language known the world around ; a language lofty enough for worship, dignified enough for courts and diplomacies, concise enough for science, explicit enough for commerce, and smooth enough for art, and tuneful to the musical ear. It is a pressing want of our time, and will be of all the coming times, till itself has come.

The progress of man toward dominion is greatly hindered by the slowness of communication, travel and transportation ; by the question of fuel, the question of friction, and the question of safety. A few centuries will exhaust the coal beds of the world, practically. Light and heat obtained by artificial processes will be in demand, in a geometrical ratio of increase, in the centuries before us. We know perfectly well where these exist, in unlimited quantities, and how to release them from their bonds. The great lakes and oceans

are repositories of oxygen and hydrogen, and comparatively of little else. And these are just the gases needed for light and heat. All that is required to enable us to turn rivers and oceans into light and heat, is a cheap way of decomposing water into its elements. Any chemist can decompose water; but every known way is an expensive way. The question of cheap fuel and high speed is therefore a simple question of chemistry. When the ocean steamer can pump her own fuel from the sea she rides, all the trouble of loading herself with coals will have passed away. It seems to one, when he thinks of it, a small and simple thing to do, to cheapen the process for the decomposition of water, so that its elements may be gathered up and used in largest quantities. Yet it is certain, that such a discovery, as this requires, would revolutionize the industry of a country like England, and modify the travel and traffic of all nations. Nevertheless, this problem is before the world, and our science ought to be modest till it has solved it. It used to be enough to say of a man, "he will never set the ocean afire," to consign him to a place below mediocrity. Till he does set the ocean aflame, let no man of science now be accounted wise above his generation.

There is, also, a grand advance to be made into the unknown powers, qualities and applications of electricity. These ten years we have seemed to be on the verge of some remarkable discovery in the way of making the prodigious forces of electricity of some benefit to the world. The fleetness of the lightning we have secured; but the power of it we have never firmly grasped and managed. That which has such velocity, which, instantaneously, makes iron run like water, must have the most terrific energy folded up in it; must have a hundred times the power of steam; must carry a storm in the bulk of a hogshhead.

The intense light and the consuming heat of electricity we are finding out, and we are learning every year some of its numerous and marvellous applications. But the sublimest use has not been discovered—that which shall make it by far the most efficient motive power ever known, and, at the same time, the cheapest, gentlest, safest and most manageable power possible to be conceived of, absolutely refusing to be a party to an accident.

There is much study now given to this agent. The experiments with it are very numerous. It is already made to drive machinery,

but only in a child's way, and in the movements of a plaything. The secret of its power is yet locked up in its bosom. With many batteries, or voltaic-piles, and numerous helices we corner it for an instant, or catch it on points of charcoal ; and then it eludes us, and we are compelled to lay our gins and snares for it, and trap it over again, in the hope to get it in possession long enough to torture the wonderful secret out of it. We feel, every day of our lives, the throb of this, the most puissant thing in all nature, no doubt; yet, while we pulse it we know not where the heart is, nor what is the law of its inmost movement, nor how tremendous its circuits, nor where are the nerves that give its arteries such awful impulses, nor how their mysterious center shall be found.

When these problems in physical science shall have been handsomely solved, we may conclude that we have, as a human race, won our empire of the sea, as well as our conquest of the land.

The atmosphere yet remains ; the splendid home of airy creatures, and man has almost no dominion there. But he must have it. It is too broad a domain to continue as a mere repository for human breath and an expanse for winged fowl. It was meant for man, not only as a robe of life, warmth and beauty, wrapped round the world he treads, but also a scene of exploit, and a highway of swift travel, and a sphere of artistic display and beautiful exhibition. The same atmosphere which man defiles and disfigures, he ought to be able to gild and adorn ; and rainbows, and painted clouds, and pictured skies are not beyond the reach of art ; though, like fireworks, possible only as the brief pageantry of hours, and the intimations of glories unrevealed. All our ballooning is a bulky and awkward business, and all our flying machines are but costly failures. We can look for no success in ærial navigation, of any lasting and constant benefit, in our present state of discovery and attainment. Balloons are too cumbrous and unmanageable to be of regular use in the conveyance of passengers ; and no flying machine will ever succeed, beyond a flattering experiment, until we know more than we do now. Even the birds of the air, whose skill men try to imitate, can carry no large weight, can convey no considerable burdens, and are, literally, but birds of passage. Were machines constructed by which one could fly like a bird, each one must still fly for himself ; and that would be hard work ; too much like a long land journey on foot, or crossing seas by rowing skiffs.

The successful, swift-as-meteor, cheap and safe navigation of the air must be postponed until further research into the elements, and the elimination of new elements, or combinations, or the release of some new gas cheaply and safely procured, and in large quantities; which shall be ten times lighter than hydrogen gas, or one hundred times. Then air ships can be floated that will carry loads of passengers, and electric motive forces can drive them, like lightnings, athwart the cope of heaven. Nor need we deem this altogether a dream of the fancy. Somewhere, amid the elements, there surely must be a vapor that shall lift our air ships on high, like as air does now our steamers above the ocean deeps.

From the air the transition is easy to the light, in which beauty and mystery are more charmingly combined than anywhere else in nature. We take up its braided beams upon our hands, and hold them as patiently, and gaze at them as tenderly, as we should at a tangled skein of glossy silk and a charming girl trying to wind it off. We begin to analyze it, and it becomes more like a wonder and a romance at every stage of our investigation. Lending grace to the form which the touch can outline, and giving brightness to all its tints and hues, by blush and change of color telling the secret of its love for the electric force, in what is known as its polarity; it finally begins to disclose to us the nature and composition of the materials of the sun itself, and thus delights us with news from that which is, beyond all doubt, "a far country."

But this light, already revealing much, already a powerful agent in vegetable and animal chemistry, and in other natural chemistries, is even now employed as an agent, not very extensively indeed, in some of the arts, in bleaching, dyeing, painting, and the laboratory of the photographer. The solar spectrum is a marvellous thing, and there is no end to the possible adaptation of it to human amusement, satisfaction, instruction and benefit, both natural and moral. The secret of landscape painting is certainly in the light; and our invention ought to do more than simply shade it off, as in the pearl picture. The time must come when the sun and the prepared canvas shall furnish us better colors and forms, and groups and combinations, than ever grew up under the hand of Zeuxis or Apelles, Raphael or Titian. And we are not to scorn the idea that, if the light can do such homely work as to bleach clothes and assist the laundress, there may be further great utilities and facilities in

it, which shall work as many more transformations than the rains of heaven do, as the floods of light exceed the floods of rain. In the wonderful chemistry of the world, no doubt, as in the composition of the diamond, the light plays some active part, almost beyond our present ability to conjecture. And it may yet be found that the sunlight which can warp planks so as to draw spikes from compact timbers, has in it a physical force which can lift mountains. At all events our speculation has no need to fold its wings, until it has alighted in that farthest East, where "morn exulting springs."

Within the empire of the air is embraced, also, the department of sound and the science of music. As yet, the music of the spheres, and the harmonies of space, and the melodies of the interstellar regions, if any music they have, is all *unwritten* music, mere improvisation, or more likely imagination; and we cannot venture away from our more solid footing into those realms of fancy. We are so far realists that we cannot be sure that there is any possibility of light, or sound, where there is no atmosphere. Yet, we cannot certainly affirm that light and sound are impossible, where atmospheres exist, which are unlike this of the earth. And our thought is, that the possibilities of music as a science, have not been, all of them, reached hitherto. There are people who have no ear for music, it is said; and there are still more who have no pleasure at all in it, and comparatively few are they who have any special delight in it. If all the possibilities of the science were reached already, and if all the possible instruments for the expressing of music were known, it is proper to infer from analogy that every ear should be opened, and every nature charmed by it, in some of the varieties. There are sights and scenes which every eye loves to behold. There are some articles that are agreeable to every palate. There are some odors that come up as fragrance into every nostril. There are articles that give delight to every hand that touches them. And while it is so comparatively easy to find those things which shall regale all the senses of the great majority of any community at once, except the sense of hearing, it has frequently been a matter of surprise, that there was no music which would find a willing ear in every individual. It would seem, therefore, from the analogy of nature, and fact, that our music has not reached its limits in development, and that there are yet possible inventions of musical instruments, and specimens of musical

composition, which shall have a power over all of us, most subduing, or exciting; a power more fraught with spells and witcheries than was ever the fabled harp of Orpheus, or the song of the syren. The best music is too much a monopoly; that which is common is much of it too rude. In the good time coming, our houses shall be full of the best musical instruments, and our hearts and mouths full of glorious songs.

Turning the attention again to things more palpable and material, has it never occurred to you, that men, the masses of men, live almost like the troglodytes still? What are human abodes made of? What are our dwellings? What are our cities? What more melancholy things are there than the sites of some of the famed cities of antiquity? How mortifying is it to think that mankind can build of nothing that will last. Going to the places where mighty cities once flourished, what do we find? Usually fragments of stone, and brick, and pottery, and heaps of rubbish, and dust and desolation. If we look forth among the stars, among the clouds, along the mountain tops, and upon the grand old woods, and then turn to our abodes—how mean they seem! How like the structures children rear of cobs, and blocks, and splinters! Human abodes and human monuments should be built of the earth's metals or crystals; of metals that cannot be corroded by air and water, as iron is; of metals that cannot be easily tarnished at all; of metals that are as sweet and beautiful to the eye as Corinthian brass or choicest silver; and of metals that can be everywhere produced in abundance and at the cheapest rates.

All our clay beds and sand hills afford the raw material for the beautiful products we are in need of. These deposits we resort to now, and by a primitive artificial process we produce from clay and sand, and heat, so marvellous a thing as an almost "perfect brick," with which to build our houses, construct our public edifices, and rear our great monuments! Could we release it from its bonds, we might procure from these sand hills the purest rock crystal and flint in vast quantities; and from these clay beds the bright, workable, and beautiful metal, aluminum, in so large a way, that houses, and ships, and other structures might be made of it, and made as it were forever. Not corroded like commoner metals by the water of the sea, scarcely gnawed by the tooth of time, eaten by no rust, needing no repairs, plaster, paint, or wash, this metal

and like ones, and this crystal and flint, with their modifications, produced abundantly and cheaply in every land, would be sources of profit, comfort and enjoyment to the human race, beyond all our present power of estimation. Certainly it is not asking very much of our science, grown so great and so proud in these later years, that it shall furnish us, out of its more than two score of metals, one at least that shall be fit to build our houses of, and our cities of; so that they may continue after us, and be a joy forever. It is time we were building of something besides "wood, hay and stubble," brick and mortar, and broken fragments of crumbling rock. The huge sand-dunes and moving sand-hills of the globe must have in them possibilities of use beyond that of the furnishing of raw material, in part, for glass, pottery and the like manufactures; and it remains for mankind to learn how to utilize them and to rejoice in them, rather than to continue to mourn over their desolations, when they drift upon cultivated acres, and bury once fruitful soils hundreds of feet below the light of the sun.

Moreover, our chemistry has been teaching us, for a generation, how like, in their chemical equivalents, are the substances known as starch and sugar. Of course they cannot be identical; but they are so nearly so that the suggestion was long ago made that they might be transmuted, each into the other. Chemistry knows, no doubt, already how one may be changed into the other, in a small way, and by costly manipulation; but no process has yet been made public, that I am aware of, in America, by which starch can be made into sugar, in a large way and cheaply. The question of the supply of sugar for the increasing use in the colder climates of the world, without resorting to the cane growths of the tropics for the saccharine matter, is an important one, which may create revolutions in commerce and modify the industries of some of the races of mankind. When fine sugars can be made from artichokes, potatoes, corn, wheat and other cereals, as well as from sap, sorghum, beet-root and sugar-cane, the sugar supply will be a question of chemistry, and ample for the largest consumption and the sweetest tooth, and it will forever cease to be a source of perplexity.

And this particular chemical change, so near to discovery, if not already discovered, and soon to be utilized, suggests ideas that range over the entire field of experimental chemistry, but especially in regard to the matter of artificial compounds and the manufactures

of articles, chemically, in imitation of such as are made by processes more natural, or nearer to nature. It is considered an honor to be able to construct instruments of music that shall imitate the human voice, the thunder, the sea, the cataract, the sounds of the more musical animals, the songs of birds, and all the pleasing and sublime voices of nature. For the eye, also, nature is copied, imitated, plagiarized, and followed artificially in statuary, painting, etching, architecture, and the decorative arts, as well as by miniature representations of her scenery, of almost every kind, as in the Villa Pallavicini, near Genoa, in Italy; and men obtain place, name, honor, and wealth, for doing these things artistically, beautifully, successfully, and with enthusiasm. It is perfectly well known, that the laboratory of the chemist can produce, by mainly artificial processes, all the flavors, and odors, and pleasant aromas that are found among the world's leaves, roots, flowers, earths, minerals, and elsewhere, distilled by nature. Nor do people care a straw how the odor has been compounded whose fragrance is that of violets, roses, or new-mown hay. And the nostrils are educated by these fabrications to the enjoyment of sweet sensations, and are not disturbed by an inquiry into the history and extraction of the perfume. Thus, by art, artfully and artificially, we minister to the seeing, hearing and smelling organs. But when we come to the tasting organs, to mouth and palate, we are very fearful of the laboratory of the chemist, and of things artificially made. We are governed by our prejudice, when our reason will teach us that our prejudice is absurd. Slowly, indeed, we are coming to eat chemically prepared food, and to drink chemically compounded drinks. Nature's processes are, all of them, largely chemical in their way; and because the human chemist reaches results by more direct ways, we are childish enough to reject the products even when we are not able to distinguish the artificial from the natural. I had occasion to look into the purchase of mineral waters, some years ago, and then I learned that every celebrated medicinal spring of Europe was imitated by chemists, and that the waters artificially prepared were not commonly distinguishable from the genuine by the taste, were not inferior in medicinal effects, and were used quite indiscriminately by physicians themselves. I met persons in Italy and France, who said that most of the best wines were so exactly imitated that few, if any, could tell the imitation from the original, and that they

preferred the use of the artificially concocted—that which was professedly so—because they knew what it was made of, when and where; and nobody knew what was in much of the wine of the markets, which was almost wholly spurious, but pretended not to be, and had to be much drugged to make it seem not to be. The Old World is probably fuller, even than the new, of all sorts of imitations and adulterations of meats, drinks, drugs, medicines, cosmetics, and all articles for ornament and luxury. Many of the articles with which food is adulterated, and drugs are adulterated, are, in fact, just as good, for the ends proposed, as the genuine article: They are cheaper in price, and are, therefore, improperly palmed off as genuine. And there is the wrong. If those who find out these cheaper articles would manufacture and sell them as substitutes for the real ones, but equally as good for the ends proposed by the use of them, while less costly, there would be good done and not evil. And it may be regarded as one of the coming certainties that we shall go to the chemists for a hundred things needed for the table, the chamber, and the nursery, which now we cultivate slowly, rear painfully, import expensively, or distill watchfully, because we can have them made to order artificially, of the best quality, and can pay for them out of a moderate income—science and art having made many of the most sumptuous articles and greatest luxuries of the olden times, the common possession of all laboring men.

Last of all, and greatest, is the dominion over man, over mind, over all the inner world, the problem of a true philosophy. The human mind has never been able to satisfy itself in regard to the origin of its ideas, and has never held to any self-consistent theory of mental development. Human speculation has flowed mainly in two channels, running nearly parallel, sunk deep into the heart of things, with a high promontory between them, difficult, or impossible, to be passed over.

The two philosophic tendencies are as old, certainly, as the schools of Greece; and Plato is the leading, early man of the one school, and Aristotle of the other. Under each general division there were, and have always been, various subdivisions. The one large class regarded the mind itself as the source of its chief ideas, as as soon as it came into certain conditions and relations. The other large class contended that the mind derived all its ideas from its sensations, directly or indirectly.

The one class maintained the *a priori* method of reasoning as the grand one. The other planted itself squarely upon the *a posteriori* method. The one professed to deal with causes, essences, substances, and realities, rather than with facts and appearances. The other professed to concern itself with phenomena, observed facts, things as they seem, and their connections, laws, and sequences. The one class deduced—descended from general statements to the particular ones, from principles to their applications. The other class induced—ascended from particulars to the general law, and from observed facts up to the great principle. These classes were sometimes known as idealists and realists, or as spiritualists and materialists.

Now, the contest that was carried on so long in Greece and renewed in the after ages, has been a lively one in Europe, since the Reformation, and has been maintained with no little vigor. In our time, the two styles of philosophy are often known as the transcendental and empiric, or, better, as absolutism and positivism. The prominent modern names—on each side—are, some of them—Hegel, Hamilton, Cousin, Comte. The positive philosophy is particularly aggressive in the more recent years. It is advocated in England by Mansel, Spencer, Lewes and Mill. It is a fruitful philosophy in the sphere of natural science, and, what is termed the practical side of things; but it limits itself so much, and conditions its knowledge so repeatedly, that it tends to lower and dwarf the immortal soul and the spiritual nature of man. In regard to the validity and extent of our knowledge, we can more readily sympathise with the other class, who have more to do with the mind itself, and employ the reason largely, hold to intuitions, make reflections, believe in insight, practice synthesis, indulge in hypothesis, stand by genius, and admit a revelation. But we cannot go wholly with either great party; nor can people generally do so. The world has groaned long with this struggle. Civilization has been retarded by it. Truth has suffered from it. The church has gone laboring between the philosophies like an ocean steamer in rough seas, with now one wheel clean out, and now the other, while the opposite one has been at the same moment so submerged as to do poor service or none. There is need, therefore, of a philosophy which shall not call itself the philosophy of the absolute, nor the philosophy of the conditioned, which shall take, if possible, middle ground between them,

and take all the truth from both of them, and combine them into a harmonious whole. And this is the problem in mental philosophy now before mankind ; and all metaphysical men should give long and earnest attention to it. It may be true that eclecticism has heretofore proved a failure ; but a new eclecticism is possible now. The world is better prepared for it. Metaphysicians ought to reëxamine the possibilities of the case. They should do so all the more hopefully, because the extreme absolutists and the extreme positivists have rushed around in different directions from opposite positions into nearly the same cavern of darkness—falling off into almost the same black abyss. The extreme positivist at the end of his research, can find no God at all. The extreme absolutist, at the outmost line of his speculation, as yet, can find no God but *Pan*. Between the two we should utterly refuse to make any choice. It belongs to our time to frame and build out that philosophy which can logically distinguish between essence and phenomena, substance and property, the Creator and the creation, the Maker and the man, the human being and the Divine Person, and rightly deal with them. The chariot of our progress cannot long go upon a single wheel. The movements of both of the philosophic tendencies are required to roll on the vehicle to conquest. And if wisest hands shall guide its steeds, its track shall smoke ere long, but with the dust of stars. And then, one of the grandest conditions of rest, joy and hope for our human race, will have gladdened the world.

It is, as I suppose, by glances like these at the situation, at the possibilities and needs of our age, at the empires to be, that we, as the advanced and thoughtful men of our day, forelooking the future, anticipating the grandeurs, may learn whither to direct our energies, how to employ our several abilities, how not to throw our short lives away, and may project ourselves farthest into the future, do our best for the sake of our long-burdened humanity, and most fitly prepare the way of the Lord upon the earth.

It is by looking away from the accomplished to the unaccomplished, from the known to the unknown, from the seen to the unseen, from the little that is to the much that needs to be, that we get our bearings, lose our pride of attainment, see our failings, admit our deficiencies, and regulate our attitudes. We have need to remind ourselves that our century is only one of the centuries of

time, and not a very advanced one at that ; that we simply walk the corridors and enter a few of the outer courts of the great temple of truth eternal ; that it is reserved for those more favored, if not better men, who shall live many ages after us, to possess themselves entirely of the glorious structure, penetrate to its interiors, behold its splendid adytum, handle its sacred arcana, and congratulate, disport and regale themselves within that vast rotunda, whose light streams through a dome of solid crystal, without flaw or fracture, and paints the scene within with such a charm, in such a beauty, as never was on land or sea.

And thus, also, in our little individualities, each working so much alone toward his destiny, we cling and creep, snail-like, up the steep and broad incline of fact, and thrust out for a time, tentatively, into these empires to be, the long antennæ of our knowledge gained, tipped with the eyes of our faith. And then we retire, leaving at least our shells as the waymarks of progress, to grow more shining and translucent in the light of suns, and as clear white specks signaling the march of the Eternal Wisdom across the wastes of time.





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